



Ohr Yerushalayim News

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News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel tov to the Rov and Rebbetzen on the birth of twin grandsons to Naphtoli and Ruchama Cohen in Israel

Mazel Tov to Boaz and Shirley Dinowitz on the birth of a granddaughter to Amram and Rachelle Dinowitz in Israel

Mazel Tov to Eli and Adina Wieder on Shifra's engagement to Shmuli Berlinger. Mazel Tov also to grandparents, Stephen and Penina Wieder

Mazel Tov to Michael and Bayla Brandeis on the recent birth of a great grandson to Ari and Shifra Rogoff

Chaim Aruchim

We wish Chaim Aruchim to the following who have Yahrtzeit this week:

Sun, 3rd Elul - Yosaif Bernhardt for his father

Tues, 3rd Elul - Joe Levene for his father

Tues, 5th Elul - David Jacobs for his mother

Fri, 8th Elul - Chavi Schjiveschurder for her father

Farewell

We wish much Hatzlocho to Bernard and Shelley Levey on their Aliyah this week

Royal Humility

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Torah.org)

This week, the Torah teaches us about royalty and its symbiotic relationship with humility. The concept of the Jewish king is discussed in this week's portion, He is given a tremendous amount of power, but there are caveats as well. He is told not to amass a large cavalry, nor shall he have too many wives lest they sway his heart. Third, he is warned against amassing an excess fortune of gold and silver. But in an interesting addendum, Hashem puts a roadblock to haughtiness in front of the king in a surprisingly different manner. "It shall be that when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself two copies of this Torah in a book, from before the Kohanim, the Levites. It shall be with him, and he shall read from it all the days of his life, so that he will learn to fear Hashem, his G-d, to observe all the words of this Torah and these decrees, to perform them so that his heart does not become haughty over his brethren and not turn from the commandment right or left, so that he will prolong years over his kingdom, he and his sons amid Israel." (Deuteronomy 15:15-17).

It seems that this Book of chastisement and its message of restraint need be with the king everyday of his life.

Need that be the case? Why not have a court castigator, a prophet or clergy who would sermonize monthly or even weekly. Does the King truly need to constantly carry and read a Book of ethics to forever keep him in check? Rav Yosef Poesner, was the son-in-law of the Nodeh B'Yehuda, the esteemed Rav of Prague. He was a brilliant scholar and an amazingly righteous individual.

During his entire life, he seemed to be plagued by a nagging wife who would belittle him at every opportunity. After a brilliant lecture, she would come into the room, and belittle him. During meetings at which his opinion was prominently sought, she would serve the company food, but at the same time she made sure to deride him. During all these outbursts, he never said a word. He never defended himself. In fact, he hung his head low, as if to agree with her words of derision.

Then, suddenly, he passed away. Hundreds came to the funeral. All of the gathered contrasted his greatness to the difficult life he had led, by being

married to a shrew of a wife who was about to bury him.

After the eulogies, his wife suddenly appeared before the coffin, crying uncontrollably.

She begged his permission to speak and then burst into tears.

"All these years," she cried, "I fulfilled the adage that a loyal wife fulfills the wishes of her husband. And due to my loyalty and respect to you and your greatness, I did whatever you had asked me to. But now that you are in the world of the truth, I can finally say the truth." She began to declare her respect for his greatness and humility, his piety and patience, his kindness and compassion.

The people near the coffin were shocked to see this woman transformed into a loving, grieving widow. And then the true shock came. She continued her soliloquy.

"Despite, how difficult it was for me, I kept the promise and commitment you had asked me to make. Any time you were treated honorably, or were asked to fulfill a prestigious role, you told me to come in and belittle you as strongly as possible. You were afraid that the honor they afforded you would make you haughty. I only complied because that was your will!"

"But now I can finally say the truth!" But that was only in front of people!

"You know how much I appreciated and cherished you!" She continued to cry over the great tzadik and lifelong companion she lost. The stunned grievors were shocked at the tremendous devotion of the Rebbitzin, who deemed herself a harrying nag all for the sake of her husband's wishes.

Humility is not easy to attain. And for a man thrust in the limelight of power, flashbulbs popping, the media pressing, and servants waiting, it is an even more arduous task. The only antidote is constant mussar, day in day out. The Torah "shall be with him, and he shall read from it all the days of his life." Every day. All mussar all the time. No weekly speeches nor sporadic sermons. If the Torah must be cherished like a wife, it also must be asked to nag us into reality. And then, it will serve its men not only delicious desserts, but also humble pie.

The Tzedek Needs to Be with Tzedek

Rabbi Label Lam (Torah.org)

I think my mind has been playing tricks on me all these years. I am looking at the verse, "Tzedek Tzedek Tirdof" as if for the first time. "Justice – Justice you shall pursue, and I am realizing now that the double emphasis is not on the verb pursuing but rather on the quality of that which is being sought, "Tzedek Tzedek". What is "Tzedek Tzedek"? Rashi explains that one should seek out a good court. Why is a standard, regular court not good enough? What makes a good court and what makes a good court Tzedek Tzedek?

More than 37 years ago my wife and I were just engaged and we were enjoying our first Shabbos together in Monsey. Now please forgive the poor analogy, but if you are in Manhattan you should go to the Empire State Building, and when you are in Paris you need to attend the Louvre,

Davening Times

Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	7.25pm
Candle Lighting	7.34pm - 7.50pm
Shacharis	7.25am / 9.15am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.33am
Mincha	2.00pm / 6.00pm / 8.20pm
Motzei Shabbos	9.25pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am / 9.30am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	7.45pm
Late Maariv	10.00pm

and if you are in Jerusalem should definitely find your way to the Kossel. While in Monsey I suggested to my bride that we go pay a visit to Rabbi Mordechai Schwab, the Tzadik of Monsey. We took the long walk on Shabbos afternoon.

As we were approaching his home, we noticed Rabbi Schwab just exiting his house and about to cross the street on the way to the Beis Midrash. We immediately adjusted our direction and we were able to head him off at the pass on the other side of the street. We wished him "Good Shabbos" and I told him the good news that I was engaged and I introduced my Kallah.

He lit up with indescribable joy and with his eyes darting upward to the heavens, he wished a hearty Mazel Tov and then uttered a few seemingly simple but incredible words that his son later shared with me was his signature Brocho. He said, "The Simcha should be with Simcha!" Then he repeated, "The Simcha should be with Simcha!", and then he carried on his way.

We stood there in stunned silence just from having stood in his presence and then when we finally spoke again, we were left wondering what he meant by that phrase, "The simcha should be with simcha!" We were taught in school never to define a word by a word. What could he have meant? What was he telling us? When eventually we figured it out, it became the theme of the entire wedding process and everything ever since. When producing a Simcha there is all the stuff of the Simcha, the invitations, the band, the booze, the gowns, and all the other nouns. Then there is the authentic feeling of Simcha. He was telling us that all those details big and small should not overwhelm and eclipse the true and lasting inner joy. What a beautiful Brocho, filled with profound wisdom and enormous practicality.

The Kotzker Rebbe commented on these words which are found in Pirke Avos, "All of your deeds should be for the sake of Heaven!" The Kotzker said, "Even your "for the sake of Heaven" should be for the sake of Heaven". What does that mean? One of my Rebbeim, who is a very great man, once told me during the month Elul when we were learning Musar together, "The problem with the Musar Movement is that it became a movement!" Mussar and Chassidus and any other manifestation of spiritual idealism will tend to become institutionalized over time. In the process of becoming uniform and regimented it can happen that some part or even much of the essential and original idealism will have evaporated. It's a constant and ever-present risk from one moment to the next! Spirituality cannot be bottled!

Setting up courts in every city gate and having good judges is a worthy practice but conventional associations have their own set of systemized and bureaucratic habits. Even the best and most idealistic institutions can become stale in their approach. When someone is seeking a legitimate decision then all the details of the case need to be looked at with fresh and open eyes. We used to have a sign in school, "Every child in your class is somebody's entire world!" Every case is unique and each individual and litigant is profoundly invested in this process of discovering the Torah's truth. Therefore, the right answer cannot just be an administrative and ceremonious response. The Tzedek needs to be with Tzedek!

Of Rocks and Hundred Dollar Bills *abbi Yisroel Ciner (Torah.org)*

This weeks parsha, Shoftim, contains a pasuk which outlines our proper approach to life and its occurrences. "When you come to the land... don't learn to do as the nations there... using sorcery or omens or contacting the dead. Hashem despises all who do that... Tamim tiyeh im Hashem Elokecha – be complete (trusting) with Hashem. (18: 9-13)."

Rashi explains that we are commanded to trust Hashem with what life brings us without trying to see into the future. Then we will be "im Hashem Elokecha" – with Hashem and the nation (am) of Hashem Elokecha.

The Ramban writes that we must focus exclusively on Hashem. Recognizing that from Him alone everything emanates, and all that occurs depends on the level of our relationship with Him.

The Chafetz Chaim elaborates on this concept of trusting Hashem and recognizing that all comes from Him. We've all experienced incidents when we've been publicly humiliated. We feel tremendous animosity toward the perpetrator. The Chofetz Chaim writes that we should feel thankful!

Imagine if a person has a tar stain on his back. He enters a hot bath, hands a rough-bristle brush to a friend and asks him to kindly scrub away! The pain is intense but the tar must be removed. When this friend has completed administering this agony and the tar is removed, you thank him!

Every aveira (sin) puts a stain on our neshama. Hashem sends along these embarrassing incidents, hell on earth situations, which cleanse the tar from our souls. Our proper response should be one of thanks!

(Now, this is certainly not meant to justify our going around and humiliating

people, serving as Hashem's messengers! We each have our free will and the proper choice we as individuals must make is not to embarrass anyone. However, we must realize that no one can use their free will to harm us, outside of Hashem's jurisdiction.)

There are those who question this mashal of the Chofetz Chaim. How can the two be compared? We feel thanks to the back-scrubber whose intention was to help us. Why should we feel thanks to the humiliator whose intention was to hurt us?!

Perhaps another mashal will clarify matters and reveal to us why this question didn't bother the Chofetz Chaim. You are walking along minding your own business. Suddenly, in the distance, you see some guy pointing at you and beginning to curse you using terms you didn't even know existed. As this guy works himself into a frenzy, he suddenly bends down, picks up what appears to be a rock and hurls it at you. WHAM!!! It hits you in the arm and it hurts! You are furious! You want to see this guy in a straight jacket! Suddenly, you look down to see exactly what hit you. You discover that it was a rock wrapped in hundred dollar bills. As you peel that twentieth hundred off the rock, your attitude has drastically changed! "Hey buddy, thanks a lot! Have a nice day!"

You now fondly recall that day when the guy hit you with two grand! You feel gratitude toward him! Thanks, buddy! That we can relate to! We had a question with the Chofetz Chaim's mashal of cleaning the tar off of our neshama. How can we feel thanks when his intention was to hurt us? Now we're talking two thousand dollars, the question no longer exists. Neshama? Tar? Thanks? We don't understand... Two thousand dollars? Thank you!!! Perhaps, the question isn't really on the Chofetz Chaim's mashal but, rather, on our own value system and priorities!

Let's bring this mashal a bit closer to home. Tamim tiyeh im Hashem Elokecha. You are walking along and get hit by a hard object. You feel anger. You turn around and see that it was your grandma! You're anger dissolves. You don't understand why she did it but one thing is very clear. Her intentions were for your benefit. If there are doubts about the validity of your grandmothers judgment, there can be no doubts about Hashem's judgment.

Tamim tiyeh im Hashem Elokecha! Don't look into the future to predict events! Trust Hashem and all that He sends you, recognizing that, in the total perspective of all of the 'worlds', it is the best thing for you.

We find this same idea further on in our parsha, with the case of eidim zo'm'min (false witnesses). If two witnesses testify that a person has committed a crime, and then two others testify that the first witnesses were with them elsewhere at the time of the alleged incident, "va'asisem lo ka'asher zamam" – they receive the punishment which they had intended to inflict upon the innocent person (19:19). If their testimony would have caused the person a financial loss, they will have to pay a similar sum. If it would have resulted in the person getting lashes – they are punished with lashes. If they tried to have him killed – they will be killed.

Rashi quotes the gemara which derives an interesting law. "Ka'asher zamam" – what they intended – not what they did. Meaning, if they attempted to have a person killed but were found to be 'zomemim' (the aforementioned type of liars) before he was actually executed, then they get killed. However, if the person was killed already based on their false testimony and then they were found to be 'zomemim', they won't get killed! This seems very difficult to understand. Aren't they all that more deserving of punishment if they actually had this innocent person killed?

One way of understanding this is, as we discussed in Parshas Kedoshim, that beis din only administers a punishment if it will serve as an atonement. If the act was so heinous that beis din's punishment won't atone for him, then it moves from the jurisdiction of beis din to that of Hashem. If a person tried to have an innocent person killed, then his death will serve as an atonement for him. If he actually had him killed, his own death won't atone for him and therefore, beis din has no jurisdiction to kill him. Hashem will deal with that case.

The Ramban, however, offers a different understanding, which ties in to our previous discussion. The very fact that Hashem had them found to be 'zomemim' before the defendant was killed, proves the innocence of the defendant. They therefore deserve death for trying to kill an innocent person. If however, Hashem only had them found to be 'zomemim' after the defendant's execution, then we view it that they must have been telling the truth! Had he been innocent, Hashem would certainly not have let beis din put him to death. The witnesses, therefore, are not punished. What they intended – not what they did.

Tamim tiyeh im Hashem Elokecha. Be trusting in the way that Hashem runs this world. Don't try to predict the future. Live securely in the present. All that happens comes from His Hand. "Ka'asher zamam" – what they intended – not what they did.